

MINORITIES.

Have They Any Rights?

A Representative Reform Convention to be held at Reading to Discuss the Question.

The Schemes for Ensuring Minorities their Rights—The "Minority Clause" System and the "Cumulative Vote"—Their Practical Operation.

On the fourth of July there was a small gathering of prominent politicians from different sections of the State at the Girard House, in this city, which did not fail to attract the attention of the more thoughtful classes.

The fundamental principle underlying our governmental polity. Where the people themselves are the fountain of power, and disagreements as to the merit and capacity of men, and the justice and expediency of measures, are not only natural but inevitable, the majority must rule.

But when the issue is shifted from the filling of an office the functions of which are to be exercised and can be exercised by one person alone at a time, to the selection of the members of a deliberative body composed of two persons or more, it assumes a different aspect.

The universal custom of the country is to avoid such a show of gross injustice as we have premised, by dividing the territory subject to the jurisdiction of the deliberative assemblage into two or more districts, each of which elects one or more members.

As for the schemes which will come up for the consideration of the convention, there are but two which are in any degree practicable, and deserve attention.

The "Minority Clause" System. The last named has for some years been in operation in this city in the election of school directors.

To show the actual workings of the system in vogue on a large scale, we will take the returns of the last Congressional election in our own State.

representative, it follows that the most equitable division of the representation of the State in Congress would be 19 Republicans to 13 Democrats.

Taking the Republican and Democratic districts apart from each other, we have 363,215 Republicans represented by 18 Congressmen—

But the defenders of the present system will insist that the 237,296 Democrats in the 18 Republican districts, and the 66,188 Republicans in the 6 Democratic districts, are without any representation at all.

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exaggerates the real Liberal strength. Again, in Hertfordshire the Liberals were to the Conservatives about in the ratio of 23 to 33, and there, by the operation of the minority clause, were returned one Liberal to 23 Conservatives.

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of the average voting constituency. In a State where as large a vote as in Pennsylvania is polled, it would require some time figuring to ascertain the limits beyond which it would be unsafe for the minority to venture in distributing their votes, but the party leaders would be found equal to the task after a little experience, if not at the outset.

Although the cumulative system has been before the public for some years, both in this country and in England, it is just beginning to attract general attention in the United States.

There are 60,000 voters in Vermont, of whom 40,000 are members of the Republican party and 20,000 of the Democratic party.

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general ticket; but each voter shall vote not fifteen ballots for said delegates at large, and said fifteen ballots may be cast all for one candidate, or divided among different candidates, in such proportions as each voter may see fit.

It still further provides that "Representative delegates to said proposed Convention shall be elected by the several counties of this State, and by the several Senatorial districts of the city of Philadelphia.

By electing thirty delegates at large, and limiting each voter to fifteen ballots, both parties have an invitation to select their best men, which they cannot disregard; and by cumulative voting, in several counties and districts both parties must be fully represented, and bad nominations could not be forced upon the people by the party lash.

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PHILADELPHIA MUSICAL ACADEMY. Books are now open for the reception of pupils for the new quarter, beginning September 5. Those desiring to become students will please apply at the office.

THURSDAY EXCURSIONS. The splendid Steamboat JOHN A. WARNER will make an Excursion every Thursday to Beverly, Burlington and Bristol.

CITY ITEMS. ENTIRE LINEN SUITS FOR FIVE DOLLARS. ENTIRE LINEN SUITS FOR FIVE DOLLARS. All kinds of Summer Clothing made in Cut, Make, and Fit than any other make of ready-made Clothing in Philadelphia, and sold at prices GUARANTEED LOWER THAN ANY OTHER.

MR. WILLIAM W. CASSIDY, the Jeweller at No. 3 South Second street, has one of the largest and most attractive stocks of all kinds of Jewelry and Silvers.

THE OLD DOMINION SAUCE is made in wooden tanks, and is free from all metallic substances. It is a most wholesome condiment, and for steaks, chops, oysters, game, soups, etc., it has no equal.

DIED. BROWN.—On the 28th instant, ROBERT BROWN, aged 3 years 4 months and 1 week.

GRILL.—On the 28th instant, MARY E. GRILL, in the 22d year of her age. The relatives and friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend the funeral, from the residence of her parents, No. 127 N. Ninth street, on Wednesday, the 31st instant, at 10 o'clock in the morning. Interment at Laurel Hill Cemetery.

WAR'S DOINGS. Important to Dry Goods Buyers. Owing to the unfortunate state of affairs on the Continent of Europe, there is a moral certainty of ALL EUROPEAN GOODS being advanced in price.

Silks, Shawls, and Dress Goods, which we propose FOR THE PRESENT to sell at old prices, not putting on one cent advance. Also, FRENCH AND LLAMA LACES.

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